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DCI CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS ON VIETNAM

CIA Subcommittee of House Armed Services
23 September 1963

The Director said there did not appear to be any cohesive military group capable of ousting the Diem regime, and further that there appeared to be no replacement for the then current regime which was capable of running the government. A new regime probably would be no better. Consequently, the Agency was urging a cautious, slow approach to the problem.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee
10 October 1963

"We have not seen a successor government in the wings that we could say positively would be an improvement over Diem. Therefore, it has been our counsel that we must proceed cautiously, otherwise a situation might flare up which might result in something of a civil war, and the communists would come out the victor merely by sitting on the sidelines."

Far East Subcommittee of House Foreign Affairs
23 October 1963

A successful coup may or may not be an improvement, and discouragement was indicated over the possibility of the Diem regime reforming its ways and regaining the confidence of the people. On the other hand, there seemed to be no replacement government waiting in the wings and the generals for the most part had no political experience. Hence it might be assumed that some protracted period of political confusion would result from a coup, and the effect that this might have on the future of the war could not be determined.

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**CIA Subcommittees of Senate Armed Services and
Senate Appropriations Committees
29 October 1963**

**No statement regarding future prospects of the war in
Vietnam noted in the Memorandum for the Record.**

**Briefings of Senators Russell and Saltonstall
1 November 1963**

In reporting on the coup then in progress and its effect on the war, the Director indicated that a structure had been built to prosecute the war and political events in the city had not yet significantly affected the war. It was not expected that the war would collapse because of the coup, noting it had not been the CIA view that the war would fail if Diem stayed in power.

**CIA Subcommittee of House Appropriations
6 November 1963**

Regarding the specific circumstances of the coup, the Director noted that the political situation would have to be watched most carefully and inevitably there would be considerable confusion for a time. No specific remarks were noted with regard to the general future situation. At that time it was not known what kind of new government would come forth.

**CIA Subcommittee of House Armed Services
7 November 1963**

Same as 6 November 1963.

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CIA Subcommittee of House Appropriations
6 December 1963

The Director stated he was extremely worried about the situation in Vietnam pointing out that the government of Vietnam could not get congealed and there was some dissension within the ruling forces. He commented there was not full rapport between the leaders and indicated that civilians were not fully brought into the government at that time. Those who had been brought in had unclear authority. The war effort had not been improved by the new government and Viet-Cong activities had increased. The DCI noted that his concern with the situation did not mean that it was in danger of going down the drain or that it was desperate. On the other hand, he indicated he saw little forward thrust. The DCI indicated that the U. S. should not go in with its own forces and fight this war, that U. S. strategy to train South Vietnamese to do their own fighting is sound. On the other hand, the U. S. could not simply pull out of South Vietnam and should "play the hand out." With respect to the then current Vietnam leaders, it was indicated that many of them are responsible and with considerable abilities but reiterated there is evidence of developing tensions and rivalries.

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